

# Women at A&M have come a long way

## The first 100 years

By DON MIDDLETON

and JOHN ADAMS

As Middleton sits at the old typewriter and pecks out this week's installment it is actually last Thursday. And it is undoubtedly the most beautiful day of the year to date. The temperature is eighty degrees, there is a slight breeze blowing and the recent showers have caused all the grass to turn green and the dust to settle.

Fifty years ago a day like this might have been the signal for a spontaneous trip down to the Brazos for the first swim of the year. Classes seem to hold no power of attraction when the first signs of spring fever begin to show up.

But this is 1976, and let's face it, who in their right mind would head for the river when the weather turns warm and the halter tops wake from their winter naps.

Women at Texas A&M. They've come a long way since Professor Charles Hutson's daughter Ethel became the first woman to attend classes here in 1895. Ethel took courses in French and helped put out the Olio, the first college publication.

Ethel's younger sisters, identical twins Sophie and Mary, followed in her footsteps by enrolling in 1899. They subsequently became the first women to complete four years at A&M.

The Hutson twins studied, of all things, Civil Engineering. And while Sophie chose the life of a mother and housewife over that of a professional woman, Mary went on to become a design engineer with a New Orleans company.

The twins were the center of attention for quite some time in Aggie-land. Their boyfriends gave each of them a cadet uniform which Mama Hutson altered to fit their feminine frames and the girls took part in every aspect of college life except drill.

When the Texas Legislature created the Texas A&M College in 1871, it was more or less taken for granted that it would be a school exclusively for men. But being as isolated as it turned out to be, it proved inconvenient, if not sometimes impossible, for the daughters of the faculty to attend school anywhere else.

Probably nobody thought too much about it at the time, but when the Hutson sisters became regulars

around the campus, they started a trend that would eventually lead to trouble for the college officials.

It became increasingly popular for girls to enroll in classes at College Station, so much so that the legislature sought a way to stem the tide.

In the grand tradition of our state lawmakers, the College of Industrial Arts for Women was established to channel the women up to Denton, and away from the boys at A&M. Years before, the legislature had done the same for blacks by establishing a separate college for them at Prairie View.

But that move didn't appear to do much for the problem. By 1925 there were no less than thirty, yes thirty, women attending A&M under the status of "special student." And worse than that, Evelyn Crawford became the first woman to receive a degree that very same year.

Drastic circumstances call for drastic action. So on September 3, 1925 the Board of Directors passed a resolution prohibiting women from attending any classes at Texas A&M College.

Well, that little gem didn't make many girls happy. But the real clincher came in 1933 when several local women, including daughters of faculty members tried to enroll in fall classes and were flatly denied admission.

The next thing President T.O. Walton and the Board of Directors knew, they were standing before the judge in the 85th District Court while attorneys for the girls in question petitioned for admission of their clients.

In January of 1934 Judge W.C. Davis made his final ruling in the case. He stated that the Morrill Act made no reference to the eligibility of women to attend the land-grant colleges, and therefore it was up to the various state governments to set and enforce entrance requirements.

Petitioned denied, case dismissed.

Judge Davis' ruling held for the next 25 years. It wasn't until March 3, 1952 that State Senator William T. Moore dared to breach the subject again by introducing a resolution which called for the admission of women once again to A&M. It was Moore's opinion that the college had been stagnating since World War I, partly due to the closed-door policy on women.

The resolution was adopted unanimously, but 11 years passed before any positive action was taken on the Senate's recommendation.

On April 27, 1963 the Board of Directors approved a policy of limited admission of women to the college. The new rules allowed women to attend the graduate college and the veterinary medicine school, as well as granting admission to the wives and daughters of faculty members and students.

The new policy came at a time when college officials, especially President Earl Rudder, began to plan for a massive expansion of the college. When the name of the

school was officially changed to Texas A&M University in '63 it was like a gun sounded that began the race to keep up with the times and if possible, pass them up.

## Editorial

### In perspective

Charges and countercharges about the Southwest Conference investigation of Jarvis Williams and Karl Godine have been tossed about by the media like so many rotten eggs.

For example, a story in The Battalion Tuesday, showed the willingness of some principals in the investigation to make statements about matters clearly in doubt. However, several things need to be put in perspective.

First of all, lie detector tests are neither official nor unofficial. They also do not indicate guilt or innocence. They merely indicate various physiological reactions to a series of questions.

Their value is so doubtful that generally they are not admissible as evidence in court. The results of lie detector tests also are supposed to be confidential.

Second, some of the reporting of so-called facts itself should be suspect. The Houston News Service, for example, has been one of the principle parties initiating and continuing the investigation. It may be too personally involved to be objective.

Third, a great deal of mystery has surrounded the investigation. Scholarship athletes in the SWC are required to sign waivers that allow such investigations. However, the results of such investigations should not be mishandled.

Damning statements about an athlete (or anybody else) belong in court.

Fourth, today is Godine's and William's chance for a rehearing. Evidence from the SWC investigation will be presented against them. They in turn will present evidence in their defense.

Perhaps then a judgment of their innocence or guilt can be made fairly and openly.

— James Breedlove



The Hutson twins, Sophie and Mary, in their modified cadet-gray uniforms. The twins completed a course in Civil Engineering at TA&MC at the age of 17. Courtesy University Archives.

## SLOUCH

Jim Earle



# The Battalion

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